

Remarks

In view of the remarks below, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and that the case pass to issue. Claims 1-6, 8, 9, and 11-18 are pending. No claims have been added, canceled, or amended by this paper.

The Examiner asserts the following rejections: (1) claims 1-6, 8, 9, 12-15, 17, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 07-290158 A to Kurokawa (hereinafter the Kurokawa patent); (2) claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Kurokawa patent; and (3) claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Kurokawa patent in view of USPN 6,477,879 to Sawa et al. (hereinafter the Sawa patent).

The Applicants' invention claims a tool for forming a hem that includes a first portion shaped for initially bending a flange over an outer panel in a first direction. The tool further includes a second portion having shape for bending the flange at angle relative to the first direction to compress the hem radially as the first portion presses against the flange. None of the references asserted by the Examiner teach bending the flange in this manner.

With respect to the rejection of claims 1-6, 8, 9, 12-15, 17, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Kurokawa patent, the Applicants respectfully submit that the Kurokawa patent fails to disclose the claimed invention. Rather, the Kurokawa patent discloses bending the flange with a preliminary bending surface 21 and thereafter bending the flange in a secondary operation with a main bending surface 22. The bending surface 22 does not bend the flange as the preliminary bending surface 21 presses against the flange. In contrast, the Applicants claim bending the flange with the second portion while the first portion is pressing against the flange. Consequently, the Applicants respectfully submit that the Kurokawa patent fails to disclose each limitation recited in the rejected claims.

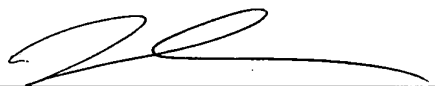
With respect to the obviousness rejections of claims 12 and 16, the Applicants respectfully submit that these claims depend from patentable independent claims and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons that the independent claims from which they depend are patentable.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that each rejection has been fully replied to and traversed and that the case is in condition to pass to issue. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned if it would further prosecution of this case to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

JAIDEEP SAMANT et al.

By



John R. Buser

Reg. No. 51,517

Attorney/Agent for Applicant

Date: 6-1-04

BROOKS KUSHMAN P.C.
1000 Town Center, 22nd Floor
Southfield, MI 48075-1238
Phone: 248-358-4400
Fax: 248-358-3351